



SAVE OUR FOREST
AND RANCHLANDS



CERF
COASTAL ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS FOUNDATION



May 31, 2017

Assemblymember Rob Bonta
California State Capitol Room 2148
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0018

via Electronic Mail
alma.barreras@asm.ca.gov

RE: SUPPORT: AB 1479 – Act to Amend GC §§ 6255 and 6259 relating to public records

Dear Assemblymember Bonta:

On behalf of the organizations listed below, we are pleased to support AB 1479 and your efforts to improve and preserve the integrity and efficacy of the California Public Records Act (CPRA).

Several of our groups regularly utilize the CPRA in our efforts to increase agency transparency regarding environmental, policy, and fiscal decision-making and to engage in the civic process.

However, we frequently encounter numerous deadline extensions, unlawful withholding of public documents, prohibitive costs, and agencies lacking in trained and available staff to coordinate the provision of responsive documents. These obstructions and delays, whether intentional or due to understaffing, thwart the purpose of the CPRA.

Not only do these failures limit our ability to meaningfully engage in issues related to our organizations' charitable purposes, but by interfering with the transparency and accountability required for good governance and impeding the democratic process, these may impose significant future costs and liabilities on agencies when they conceal actions that may be illegal, unwarranted, inadvisable, or contrary to the will of the majority of the residents they serve.

The provisions of attorneys' fees and court costs to prevailing parties has long been recognized as a social justice tenet that assures redress for legitimate grievances in court are available regardless of means. With regard to public records requests, access to information in the public domain must be available on an equitable basis to all.

The public will be better served by greater access to public documents, especially those that allow for greater participation in the agency decisions which impact them.

On behalf of the members of our organizations, we encourage the passage of this bill to increase governmental transparency and public access to the public's documents.

Sincerely,

David Grubb
ECO San Diego

Matt O'Malley
San Diego Coastkeeper

Marco Gonzalez
Coastal Environmental Rights Foundation

James A. Peugh
San Diego Audubon Society

Dr. Steven D. Franker
Inland Oversight Committee

Pedro Quiroz, Jr.
San Diegans for Open Government

Nicole Capretz
Climate Action Campaign

Duncan McFetridge
Cleveland National Forest Foundation
Save Our Forest and Ranchlands